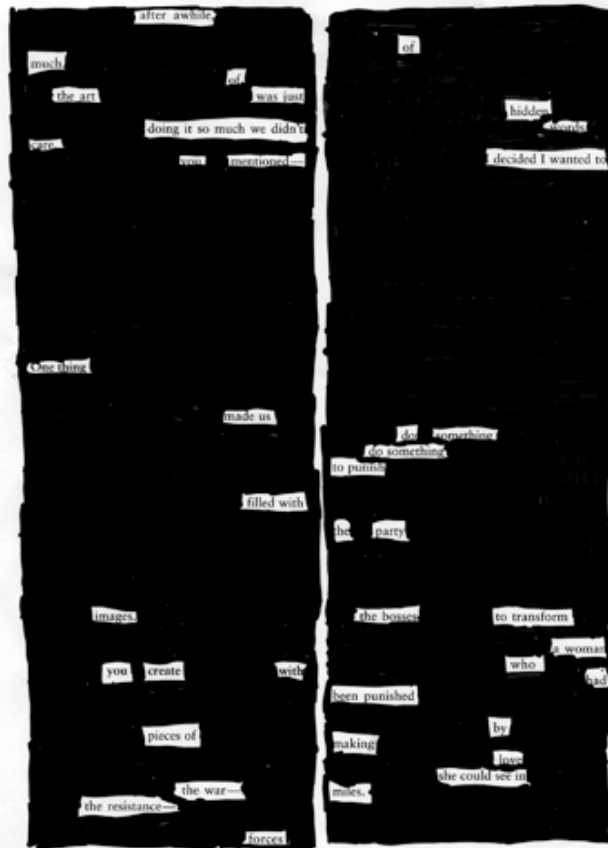


"That's when I realized that words are used to hide things and photographs are used to show them."



Sew it Seams

Experiences and Perceptions of Home

SMP in Studio Art, Fall 2011

Koko Olszewski

The Pieces

The Ideas

Introduction	p. 3-4
Definitions	p. 4-6

The Feelings

Interview 1	p. 7-10
Interview 2	p. 10-12

The Progressions

Summer Work	p.13
Initial Intentions	p. 14-15
Progress Critique 1	p. 16-19
Intention Statement 1	p. 19-20
Studio Visit (Ying Li)	p. 20-21
Midterm Critique	p. 22-23
Intention Statement	p. 24
Progress Critique	p. 25-26
Intention Statement	p. 27
Studio Visit (Carrie Patterson)	p. 28

The Projections

Annotated Bibliography	p. 29-32
Future Reading	p. 32

The Insights and Inspirations

Artist Talks	p. 33-36
Artists Sources	p. 37-38

The Ideas

Introduction

To me, art has always been a means of understanding the world around me. In high school, art was a series of experiences rooted in self-expression. And while this was beneficial to my development as both an individual and an art maker, I was always rather uncomfortable with the singular, exclusive nature of it. I first came in to contact with art as that extended beyond the self when I was volunteering at a non-profit in Baltimore in high school. I spent weekends and summers at the office (a converted row house on North Charles Street) and out in Baltimore City learning about community, resources, poverty, HIV, addiction, and gentrification. It was here that I saw that art could use this self-expression and identity development to be a voice in the community. We would make collaborative murals on the boards that substituted for doors of row houses that had been left for dead. We built cities out of recycled bottles and made quilts about social justice. From this time on, I wanted art to be much more than simply an expression of myself, but rather a coming together of voices to tell a larger, more complex narrative. In my sophomore year of college I had the privilege of taking a life changing photojournalism class with Gabriela Bulisova. Our final project was to tell the story property rights. After talking to Professor Julie King, I was made aware of the Lexington Manner community known as the Flattops. Through interviews with a former resident and local government officials, I was able to gain a new perspective on the very place I had been living in for two years. With support and encouragement from Gabriela, I was able to create a visual story that expressed the inadequacies of the local government, the abandonment of a community, and the displacement of the people who made up this community. This experience lead to my involvement with habitat for humanity.

When I began my St. Mary's Project, I knew I wanted to continue to explore how art could be a means for raising awareness of the housing situation in St. Mary's County. One of the main goals of my project is to connect the college campus to the larger St. Mary's County community through raising awareness of the experience of living in the county and developing dialogue of parallel experiences to facilitate empathy and more personal connections. I started out by trying to create an experience of displacement in the context of the campus community by interrupting the everyday routines of students in their public spaces (no, I'm not responsible for the mold). I began to realize that my plans for public art installations were structured as one-sided experiences; my attitudes on display for an audience whose only involvement was to listen...another act of self-expression. I couldn't represent an experience that wasn't mine. For this reason I decided that I needed to find a more collaborative way of engaging the community, a way to create a collective experience rather than a singular one. It was from this type of thinking that the quilt was born. Quilt making is a community tradition rooted in collaboration and story telling where everyone could actively contribute their narratives. I gave the

participants a series of brainstorming questions asking them to consider what home and community means to them. Then I provided materials for the participants to put their ideas on to a panel. I collected panels from several different groups and individuals from both St. Mary's County and the college community and sewed them together in a grid pattern, so that each panel was bound to the others. I attempted to spread out the panels so that different ideas and groups were represented next to each other.

My hope is that this quilt will act as both a canvas to tell stories as well as a meeting ground for dialogue. My intention is not for this to be a traditional quilt, but rather a metaphor for separate entities coming together to create a whole. Despite the fact that we are all living in the same geographical location, our experiences of housing and home vary. Coming together, despite differences in gender, ethnicity, race, income, age, and ability, is exactly what community means to me. It's a dialogue that works towards celebrating those differences. While this quilt may be a long road away from that celebration, it is my hope that it can generate the necessary discourse to facilitate the development of a more unified community based on respectful and compassionate relationships.

Definitions

com·munity [kuh-myoo-ni-tee] *n.*

1. a. the people living in one locality
b. the locality in which they live
2. a group of people having cultural, religious, ethnic, or other characteristics in common.

How it relates to my SMP: While we live in the same geographical location, the St. Mary's College community and the St. Mary's County community seem to be on entirely different planets most days. By evoking housing experiences for both communities I am hoping to highlight both similarities as well as differences so that everyone may leave with a greater awareness of the experiences of each other. I think a majority of the students on this campus are unaware of the housing displacement and homelessness that exists in the county. My wish is that the College community becomes more aware of their place within the greater St. Mary's County community, as well as for the county community to feel more accepted and acknowledged by the college community. It is my hope that the dialogue facilitated by this project can begin to build bridges on the road to creating a larger, more connected community.

os·cu·lation [os-kyuh-ley-shuhm] *n.*

1. *Mathematics* A contact, as between two curves or surfaces, at three or more common points.
2. Close contact.
3. The act of kissing.

How it relates to my SMP: I use the word osculation to describe the point at which our lives intersect, if even for a brief second.

visceral [ˈvi-sə-rəl, ˈvis-rəl] *adj.*

1. Characterized by or dealing with coarse or base emotions; earthy
2. Felt in or as if in the internal organs of the body

How it relates to my SMP: visceral is a resonance with the innermost core of a human being. It's that feeling when you're about to fall asleep but then you are jolted back to consciousness. It's those words stuck in your gut. The words you wish to fill the leaky spaces in your heart. Words we can't pronounce. Words we can't begin to know. But words we feel. we feel them there like rocks under our feet on the bottom of a river. Recycled pieces of life. Of creation and destruction; of metamorphosis. Weathered. Eroded. Heated. Subducted pieces of life. We don't know if we'll ever have the courage to reach down and pull them out. But we know they are there and we are forever reminded of our consciousness with each consequential breath. I believe that if art can produce a visceral experience for the audience that stops us from thinking about theory and composition and justifications even for a brief moment then it can truly begin to affect how we perceive the world.

activism [ˈaktəˌvɪzəm] *n. v*

1. The policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.

How it relates to my SMP: I actively sought the stories, narratives, and voices of individuals in an attempt to shed light on our similarities as well as celebrate our differences through a shared experience of place, space, and the conception of home to bring a community closer together.

collaboration [kəˌləbəˈrɑːʃən] *n.*

1. The action of working with someone to produce or create something.
2. Something produced or created in this way.

How it relates to my SMP: I chose the medium of quilt because the product is metaphorically and physically a manifestation of several different efforts coming together to form a whole. This collaboration acts as a platform to begin a dialogue.

ac·ces·si·ble [ak'sesəbəl] *adj.*

1. (of a place) Able to be reached or entered.
2. (of an object, service, or facility) Able to be easily obtained or used.

How it relates to my SMP: Traditionally, quilting is considered a craft, or “woman’s work.” This stratification between craft and high-art is what makes it difficult to facilitate a discourse or discussion about possibilities and potentials. I attempt to make art available to everyone by offering workshops, providing materials, and making myself available for support throughout the development of the quilt. I also believe that the gallery is not accessible to all communities involved, so I am going to show the quilt at different locations once it is finished so that all communities may view it.

Em·pa·thy [em-puh-thee] *n.*

1. Identifying oneself completely with an object or person, sometimes even to the point of responding physically, as when, watching a baseball player swing at a pitch, one feels one's own muscles flex.
2. Direct identification with, understanding of, and vicarious experience of another person's situation, feelings, and motives.

How it relates to my SMP: Building empathy in others is a means of creating connections. As history continues to repeat itself, the only way to end the cycle is to create our own. We need to come together and share our stories and hope that others are willing to listen and share theirs too.

The significance of art is not so much in the product as in the process through which we learn to interpret this existence. I believe that art is a medium through which individuals can reach a sense of self-actualization, which in turn facilitates an increased awareness of others’ experiences. The empathy developed through this process is what will bring us closer to loving and respectful relationships.

The Feelings

Interview One

Interviewed by Jenny Metz

1. *What was your first memorable art experience and how is it relevant to what you are doing now?*

My first memorable art experience was in pre-school. We had some sort of hat day where we were all supposed to wear crazy hats, but I interpreted it as we had to all make our own hats and so I went home and my mom helped me to cut out a paper plate and hang strips of construction paper all around it. When I got to school on that Monday everyone was wearing regular old hats and I was wearing this crazy made up hat, but I won a prize for most creative hat. I got one of those balls on a string connected to a paddle. I think that act of using creativity to solve everyday problems has been a constant theme throughout my childhood. I went to a K-8 Catholic school and we only had Art History class maybe twice a month from this lady who didn't even have a classroom. Despite that lack of formal art education I still found myself engaged in activities that were creatively stimulating whether it was making my own clothes with the help of my mom or making a pencil holder out of popsicle sticks and an empty soup can. It was only when I got to high school where I began to see community activism and creativity merge. I volunteered with this non-profit in Baltimore called Students Sharing Coalition. I think that my experience there over the years had a profound impact on the person that I am today and the person I continue to strive to be.

2. *Who is your favorite artist and why?*

I worked at The American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore this summer and I really love all of the artists there, although they wouldn't consider themselves artists. Most of the people in that museum make art because they feel this calling to. Many of them don't start out as artists either. I think that's what's most inspiring to me, is that people without formal training can have their work featured in a museum because it is still saying something important regardless of how "high art" it is and most of the art is unbelievable and it's made in inventive ways. The visionaries in the museum just have a different way of seeing the world and to me that is the most important part of art making. It's a way of understanding and interpreting your world and all of the players in it. One of my favorite artists this summer was Madeline Freedman. She makes these silhouetted cutouts using cuticle cutters...and she's only 14 years old. The idea that there is a museum in this world where 14 year olds can have their work admired is a world that I want to live in. Everything about the Visionary museum just makes me believe that art can be this

positive and accessible experience.

3. *What artist or type of art do you dislike the most and why?*

While I believe that any act of creativity is valid and that everyone can and should participate in these acts, I strongly dislike any kind of art that separates people from each other. This could take many forms including inaccessible art both physically such as expensive art in expensive museums or, you know, intellectually. I think that art should be an experience that brings people closer together to greater understand and appreciate our experiences. I don't think that art should be this elitist thing that only a portion of the population can partake in. I think that art should inspire more art and more action and more loving. So many people have this notion that they can't do art because they have been socialized to believe that art is this rigid practice that requires "talent". I can't count the number of times I've heard someone say they wish they could make art but that they don't because they don't think they are any good at it. Art that I dislike is art that creates this barrier between art makers and the rest of the world. I truly believe that art is for everyone and that we've just been conditioned to believe there is this stratification. It's a socially constructed notion that inhibits so much progress and solidarity.

4. *What inspires you? What are some of the sources, both within art and outside of art that you turn to?*

I am inspired by selflessness, by people who have big endless hearts and also narwhals and glitter. I think that there is so much wondrous magic that exists in this world and that despite all of the hardships and heartache that plague our bodies and our minds, I think that there is still so much light for us to hold on to. I'm inspired by community activists who have the strength and courage to attempt to make a difference despite everyone telling them that they are up against impossible odds. I'm inspired by my close friends who have taught me to find positivity and humor in any situation. I'm inspired by dad who has worked so hard to do what he loves for a living.

As far as artists go, I find myself drawn to artists who don't make art for themselves or for profit, artists who use art as a forum for dialogue and education. I also really enjoy spoken poetry. When I'm feeling like I need a boost or reminder that I'm not alone I always go to YouTube and look up videos of poets such as Anis Mojgani, Andrea Gibson, Buddy Wakefield, Derrick Brown. I also really enjoy spending quality time outside and biking and hiking and swimming... going to such a beautiful school inspires me to never take anything for granted... to be honest I think I could go on with this list forever. A lot of things inspire me really.

5. *What draws you to the medium and materials you work in?*

Recently I began working in mixed media but up until then I had primarily been interested in photography. My interests in photography have definitely shifted over the years from being a means of expressing my teenage angst to being a tool for

documentation and activism. Lately I've been experimenting with a lot of found and recycled objects. I really like the idea of using pieces of things or broken things to build something entirely new. In some sense it's really empowering. I am also really attracted to the idea of using everyday objects because of their accessibility. I think that this really creates this idea that art is making something from what others might consider nothing. You can make anything out of anything if you try hard enough I think. For example, at the Visionary Museum where I interned this summer they had a welcome mat made out of toothbrushes and they also had an artist that painted on pizza boxes and one that made a monkey out of toilet paper and one that used make up to paint pictures... I could go on... but I think that this really reinforces the idea that art is for everyone and that everyone CAN and SHOULD make art in whatever that might mean to them.

6. *What, in your mind, makes a work of art successful?*

This is a really interesting question because I think that both success and failure are completely subjective terms. For me personally, I think a piece of art is successful if people see it and it inspires them in one-way or another. Like I also said earlier, I think that when art can create a dialogue that generates awareness and also builds loving and respectful relationships among people that it is successful. I think it would also be successful if it accessible. Just because there is a million, bajillion dollar painting hanging in a museum somewhere doesn't make it successful to me. It's successful if it can make people happier whether that is in the process of making the art or it is in the product of the art making. I think successful art also is able to give a voice to the silenced. It should wake up sleepers, but encourage dreamers.

7. *What motivates you to make art?*

A lot of times I see art as a challenge. I am motivated by the need to better understand the world I live in and I use art to do that. It's that nervous, but excited crawling out of your skin with anticipation, heart beating so fast you remember that it's there feeling when you are shaken with purpose and the fire in your heart is burning from injustice. What motives me to make art is other people...it's their pain and suffering but also their beauty and light. It's the need for connection and closeness. The way that creating something can bring people together and create a connection is really just magical to me.

8. *How is your art a response to the world you live in?*

My art is a response to apathy and the notion that you're just one person and that you can't make a difference. I think that there are so many reasons and circumstances where giving up seems like the best option but as Andrea Gibson would put it, "We have to create. It's the only thing louder than destruction." I was an orientation leader this year and a general rule we had was that if you said something negative (often times even just joking) about someone that you would get called out and told you have to say two nice things about them. I want my art to be those two nice things. I want it to be positive empowerment and an inspiration for possibilities. While I believe there is a lot of

injustice in this world, I think that art is one way of understanding the world and making sense of it and coming out a stronger person that knows they aren't alone. I want people to know that art is not this intangible experience, but rather an experience to be shared between everyone, a language that all can speak and listen and reflect and act upon. I think there is a universal language involved in art that can be found nowhere else. It speaks in all tongues, genders, cultures, religions, and faces. It doesn't call for assimilation, but rather leaves the door open and invites you in to share a meal.

9. *Ideally, where do you see yourself in five years? How is art part of that?*

I would like to be continuing to challenge myself and my perceptions about the world. I would love to be working in a community setting making art with kids. When I went to the Gambia in the summer of 2010 I worked a little bit with a UNICEF program called FAWEGAM (Forum For African Women Educationalist: Gambia). They had a bunch of creative projects that helped girls gain access to education and teach girls and boys about gender equality. I would ideally like to be doing some sort of community building work like that. I want to be an advocate for kids and more importantly I want to be able to give them the tools to be advocates for themselves. I realize that this might not directly involve art, but I think that it definitely involves fostering a lifetime of creativity.

Interview 2

Interviewed by Jenny Metz

1. *Why is it so important for your art to engage with communities?*

Engaging with the community is a means of actively facilitating a dialogue. Art, to me, is not a skill or a talent, but rather a tool that can be used to help us better understand ourselves, each other, and the world. I really want to redefine the traditional conception of art and show others how powerful this tool can be if they want to use it. I think that art can be therapeutic, it can be comforting, it can be challenging. It can be anything you want it to be as long as it's serving a purpose for you. I want to use art to bring people closer together. In order to facilitate this closeness, I need to actively engage with the communities I wish to bring closer together to hand over to them what I know art to be and how they can use it as such if they want.

2. *How does the act of collaboration contribute to the meaning of your work?*

One of the main goals of my work is to bring people closer together. I think that so many of us feel alone so often and it is my wish that my work can show us that we

aren't so alone. Through the act of making meaning and sharing our experiences we bring together a multiplicity of feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. Using art as a forum for this inner and outer dialogue helps us to recognize the complexity of the human experience. Exploration of the self can lead to new ways of perceiving others' experiences. This expanded perception ignites an openness and empathy towards others' experiences. The development of self through art making in the form of articulation of experiences is the facilitator to begin a discourse in understanding and appreciating the beauty of diversity. It is the process, rather than solely the product that is the work of art in this case.

3. Why is a quilt an effective method of story telling?

A quilt is a metaphor for community and diversity. It is a collaboration of different pieces coming together to create a cohesive whole. These pieces may be thought of as insignificant on their own, but together they create a functional blanket that could be used to remind us of warmth. After midterm and looking at this project called "Shooting Back" founded by Jim Hubbard I decided that this is the best way to create this collaborative project where the artwork is in the hands of the storyteller. Anything that I touch will have my fingerprints on it, so I wanted to find a way to make sure that these representations of experiences were true to the story holder's wishes. A quilt is also an item found in the home, so it is only appropriate that it is canvas through which these stories of house and home are represented.

4. Why do you think it's important for your work to be outside the traditional gallery space? How do you think a work's location impacts its meaning?

To me, galleries only reach a certain, limited audience. I think that a person with specific interests and motivations will attend the gallery show. Art made by/with/for a community needs to be out in the world and specifically that community. If this work is not accessible to those who contributed to it, or those in the communities that contributed to it, then it's not successful. On the other hand, I think that having the quilt in the gallery will challenge traditional notions of stratifications between art makers and the rest of the world. Most galleries and museums only host art that is made by "artists." In this case, the art makers are not formally trained artists. This presents a new perception on who can create art (answer: everyone) and essentially what art is.

5. What is one suggestion or comment you received at the mid-term critique that has stuck with you and been a driving force in your subsequent decisions? How has this manifested in your work?

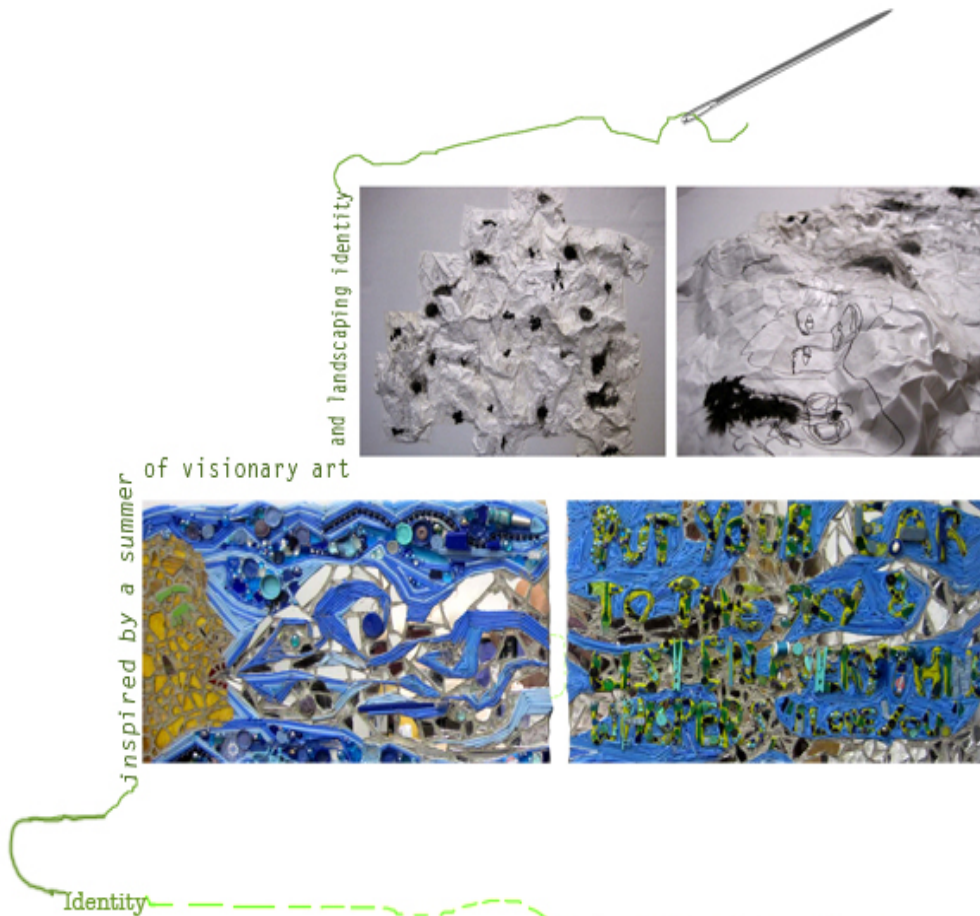
I think Joe's comment about reconnecting with my communities and really considering how my hands affect the representations of experiences have stuck with me. I immediately got back in contact with community members I had previously worked with and attempted to make some new connections as well. I know now that I need to leave the representation in the hands of the storyteller. Another comment that has stuck with me is Carrie's about how my art doesn't need to be a product, but it can be a documentation of the process of connecting with the communities. This really freed up my mind to explore different possibilities and led me to the idea of creating a quilt and spending time with the communities, which always will be most fulfilling for me.

6. How has your approach to connecting communities changed over the course of the semester? Do you think you'll keep working on this next semester? Why or why not, and if not, do you have any ideas for next semester?

Next semester I will do a community mural/mosaic if it kills me! My approach to connecting with communities has changed over the course of the semester. I think I started out wanting to raise awareness of an issue to get people interested and conscious of housing issues and then proceed to get people involved. The manifestation of this idea ran into several snags, most prominently with representation of experiences. I was trying to represent an experience to the college community that had been told to me, but I didn't fully consider how this was slowly becoming my interpretation of an experience and moving away from the original experience of housing (which was not my own). Now I know I need to spend time in and with these communities, continually building relationships and friendships.

The Progressions

Summer Work



Identity

I decided to represent fluidity of identity by creating a macro investigation in which I followed my friend around for two days and drawing blind contours of her in different settings and situations. I chose to do blind contour because it is a continuous drawing and the drawing utensil is not lifted from the paper from start to finish. Then I dipped the drawings into the river, an apparent symbol of fluidity. Finally, I pasted them all together so that they formed a 3-D landscape, similar to that of a topographic map. Both these identities and locations changed throughout the project bringing to light the question as to what a true self is if we are constantly shifting and as Goffman would put it, "performing" for others.

Place

Space is an integral part of experiencing art. Contexts can be comfortable, threatening, accessible, or exclusive. this summer I learned about the "Visionary Environment" in which the artist turns their entire environment into a piece of art. This is similar to the idea of installation art, but this transforms the whole space permanently. While I am interested in public art and its place within a community; I am also interested in the communities themselves. Communities are both physical spaces and intangible connections. Before one can create public art within a community, they must understand the shared experiences within that space and place.

Initial Intentions

To me, art should be accessible, empowering, and challenge social conventions. There is a quote by Bob Dylan that starts with, "Museums are cemeteries" and goes on to talk about how art should be out in the world and not locked up in places of privilege. I want my art to be in the community, made with the community. Something that we talked about a lot at the Visionary this summer was transforming our environments from ordinary to extraordinary. Whether this is done through empowerment and community involvement or literally transforming a space, my goals for this year are to be an instrument in facilitating this transformation.

To start off this semester I want to get items from the Habitat ReStore that represent pieces of a house. I want to do a public installation somewhere on campus that is visible and can be accessed by all students. Right now I think that would be the path to campus center. I want to fasten these items to the lamp posts or inside of the campus center so that those walking by see the pieces of this house and hopefully think of their own experience with housing, present them with facts about housing in their immediate community and potentially empower them to get involved. Items such as doors and windows are the dividers of inside and outside. They are also the bridge between these two worlds. I want to transform these items to make them more noticeable. I think that if they are embellished or beautified, the audience might think of these objects in a different light. I want people to see these items and be inspired to beautify their environments whether it is just by cleaning up outside of their houses in the morning after a party on the Greens or it is to help build a house in a community where affordable housing is sparse. I am also very drawn to the idea of mosaics using glass pieces because it forces the audience to see themselves in the work, to become a part of it. This interaction will change each time they come into contact with the work because they will be totally different than they were a week, a day, or even five minutes ago. For me, the fluidity of this self-reflection offers a reminder of the chance for renewal and change that can extend beyond the more overt concerns with housing. The pieces aspect of the mosaic appeals to me because often broken things make the best building supplies. Also the way tiny pieces come together to create an even bigger, more cohesive piece is reflective of the way members of a community can work together to be something bigger, better, and beautiful.

Another idea I have been toying with for this project would be to have a visual representation of a statistic. For instance I would collect used beer cans and designate a number for each beer can to represent and then have a sign that says something like "each beer can represents 3 people that live without housing in St. Mary's County" or something like how much money a number burritos from chipotle could be used to build a house (i.e. For the cost of 500 burritos you could

buy enough studs to build a house... I am just making these numbers up for an example). Then I would get like burrito wrappers to represent this. I really want to relate this to the everyday lives of a college student so it is in terms they can fathom.

I would eventually like to develop an additional interactive/collaborative aspect of this project. This would possibly entail setting up a box at the campus center and asking for household items and then using them to decorate a door, window, shutter, etc. I think it might also be cool to have doors painted with chalkboard paint and have a question to be answered on them like: "If you were a part of a house, which part would you be" or the more obvious "What does home mean to you?"

At the end of the year my goal is to be able to donate the work I make back to the ReStore for their recycled art auction so that the pieces may be utilized and the money from the auction can go towards building.

Progress Critique One

public instillations



and
statistical representations



Description of Proposed Projects

Ideally I would like to create public art installations around campus in high trafficked areas. There would be three different phases of installations.

1. The first would be a display on the path right before the library tunnel. There would be several items strewn about the path, each one with a different word, and when read together would say, "Where are you going to sleep tonight?" In order to make a clear distinction about the intentions of this question I would also have a shopping cart filled with clothes and blankets. The items that would have text on them would be: A mattress, a comforter, a cardboard box, a tarp, a pillow, a stuffed animal, a sleeping bag and a sweatshirt. I would be providing all of these items. The installation would only be up for one day and would be set up early morning the day of and taken down that night. I want for this to be an obstruction in the path. I realize that this may cause some concerns for traffic, but I feel that in order for this to be successful that it needs to displace people from their normal routine. I think that this displacement is a symbolic effort in making people more aware of the issues at hand. As far as bike traffic goes, I think that if students are coming from North Campus there is a steep enough incline that they will be able to dismount off of their bikes and avoid running into any of the object. If the students are coming from the Calvert area, there will be a big enough space between the Library overhang and the items for the students to see what is coming. Additionally I foresee there being a potential concern for if the items get moved. This could also change the meaning and perception of the project. I do not think that if the items got stepped on that it would change the meaning, but I would take the precaution to weigh down the items to make sure that they don't move.

2. The second display would be an installation on the Campus Center Patio. I am going to attempt to create a visual of the statistic of number of homeless people in St. Mary's County. Each pillow donated from a student with their name and room number on it will represent 4 people in St. Mary's County who are homeless (1,884 was the statistic from 2008). The pillows will be placed on benches, chairs, tables, and on the ground in an effort to make this statistic feel truly overwhelming and realistic. On a sheet laid flat in the middle of Campus Center Patio I will have painted, "Each pillow represents 4 people in St. Mary's County who are homeless." This installation also only needs to be up for one day. At the end of the day I will collect the pillows and bring them back to my studio to return them to the students they belong to.

3. The third and final piece of this series of installations would be a displacement of myself from my dorm room. I have picked two locations that I would take the bed frame, mattress, desk, and all of my clothes from out of my room and sleep outside in the public over night. These three locations are the middle of the Greens and Dorchester Circle. Each of these will be on a separate, consecutive night. I foresee there being concerns with weather, the elements wearing on the college owned furniture and my personal safety. As of right now, it seems like the second week of November is when this would take place. I think that if I created enough layers that I

would be warm enough through the night. As far as safety goes, I would not mind having friends also sleep outside with me if they offer too. I also would not be opposed to public safety being around, although I would not initially request it. The wearing on the furniture could potentially be a concern, but I don't think that two nights outside is going to be much of an issue unless there is rain, in which case I will have an alternative date. I also realize the transportation of these items is something I am going to have to work out.

Critique Response

Overall I felt that the critique was really helpful. I think that being pushed to consider all of the ways this will be interpreted by the audience is critical, so hearing how others react to this idea is a great way to gain feedback and adjust the project so that it makes the greatest possible impact.

For the first installment, I will be putting the objects trailing off to the side of the path so that they still interrupt a walk to class or the great room, but they do not block the walkway for those with wheel chairs. I also think that trailing off to the side will stop a lot of movement of the objects, but if a student intentionally moves or kicks an object it will still prove a necessary point. I will still scatter the objects instead of having them in a symmetrical straight line. I think that this chaos is a really important feeling to get across to the students. I do, however, need to work a little bit more on the narrative. It was suggested that I really concentrate on how the text communicates the story of homelessness and ways to humanize it. Perhaps I will talk to Sue Johnson about text because I know she has much expertise on the subject. I could also talk to Ying Li when she comes to visit because she touched on text and calligraphy in her presentation. Additionally, I will be figuring out a way to make this line up with the video camera on the path and see if Media services will let me record the reactions to the installation.

For the pillow installment, I still want to collect pillows, but I am going to re-think the way it is presented. Lisa mentioned in one of our meetings the AIDS quilt and how the size of it is what is so visceral. This will be a source I will turn to for inspiration. I need to find a space on campus that students can see this installation in a grid-like formation, or even piled up. I also really like Remina's idea of pinning the statistic to the pillow instead of on the giant sheet. She also suggested that maybe I could get a sponsor to donate money for each pillow that I collect and then I could donate that money to Patuxent Habitat for Humanity. The amount of space that this visual statistic will take up will have a greater impact of the representation of people without homes in St. Mary's County to make these intentions a visual reality have evolved after the first critique. My main goal is still to connect the St. Mary's College community to the St. Mary's County community through shedding light on issues in the county that the students of St. Mary's College might not have on their thought radar. I want students to be fully aware of the privileges they have on a day to day

basis and offer them an outlet to use that privilege to help those in their community if that is what they wish to do after learning about the community and the spaces and people that could use support.

I still think that the best way to begin this dialogue with the St. Mary's college community is to create public installations with visceral imagery. I need to create narratives and objects that humanize the homelessness experience and make it as closely relatable to the student's lives as possible. To do this, I will use objects that people emotionally relate to comfort or hominess. I will then use these objects to create a parallel between inside and outside, having shelter and not having shelter. I want the students to be able to take a step back and consider how they would feel if their personal items were occupying this space (or, rather, not occupying that space).

Next I want to specifically use one of those comfort items and create a visual representation of those who do not have a private space to occupy. I imagine that this representation will take the form of a symmetrical grid to create a truly visceral undertaking of the number of people without a home in their immediate community.

Finally, I want to displace myself from my private space. I think that creating an experience where I am vulnerable and exposed will really force students to think about the comforts they have on a day-to-day basis and how they might begin to consider what the people without these comforts have to go through.

I am also interested in making work that can also contribute to the progression of more affordable housing in the community. If there is any way to use these installations to raise not only awareness, but also funds to give to an organization such as Habitat for Humanity, I think I would feel that the project was successful.

New Intention Statement

I am not quite sure that my intentions for my SMP have changed, but rather the way I will attempt community is to create public installations with visceral imagery. I need to create narratives and objects that humanize the homelessness experience and make it as closely relatable to the student's lives as possible. To do this, I will use objects that people emotionally relate to comfort or hominess. I will then use these objects to create a parallel between inside and outside, having shelter and not having shelter. I want the students to be able to take a step back and consider how they would feel if their personal items were occupying this space (or, rather, not occupying that space).

Next I want to specifically use one of those comfort items and create a visual representation of those who do not have a private space to occupy. I imagine that this representation will take the form of a symmetrical grid to create a truly visceral

undertaking of the number of people without a home in their immediate community.

Finally, I want to displace myself from my private space. I think that creating an experience where I am vulnerable and exposed will really force students to think about the comforts they have on a day-to-day basis and how they might begin to consider what the people without these comforts have to go through.

I am also interested in making work that can also contribute to the progression of more affordable housing in the community. If there is any way to use these instillations to raise not only awareness, but also funds to give to an organization such as Habitat for Humanity, I think I would feel that the project was successful.

Studio Visit [Ying Li]

After attending Ying Li's talk I was very excited to hear that she would be visiting our studios. When she is not the artist in residence at St. Mary's College, she works as a professor herself, at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. I think that her experience in teaching art and her enthusiasm for art made my studio with her very productive.

I am just beginning on a new project and I only had sketches to show Ying, but she had a plethora of suggestions and encouragement. I explained to her how I was interested in bridging the gap between the two communities, and in order to do this, I wanted to create awareness about the people and places that make up this community. I told her how I wanted to use several doors to create mural depicting members of the community. She really liked the idea to use doors and said that the allusion it created would be one that the audience would be able to connect with. She made the suggestion that I should stick with four doors, but create variations within each individual door. We discussed the possibility of one door having the text in the body, one having the text in the negative space, one having a photo collage, and one using the real person's clothes. She suggested that I ask the people I interview for clothes that they may be getting rid of and then painting the text on the clothing. The artist Anselm Kiefer was suggested as a source because he takes clothing and posts it on the wall. I really like this idea because it will definitely get me closer to that visceral feeling. The art would also still be about storytelling rather than my interpretations. I do think that it might be difficult to get clothes, especially from people who are in these living situations, but it is something I will definitely keep in mind to problem solve.

I told her about how I want to use mirror mosaics to create a head where people can literally see themselves in someone else. Ying thought that this was a great idea. She also felt that each figure should have the same gesture because it becomes less descriptive and my symbolic. I am not entirely sure that I want this to be symbolic, because again, it takes it from personal story to detached and

dehumanized. Ying also suggested playing with color, perhaps a color that held a symbolic meaning to the community. She felt really strongly that the figures needed to be bold and I agree.

Overall, it was really nice to have an outside perspective on my project and to get a bit of reassurance that I was heading in the right direction. It's so hard sometimes to move forward with an idea when you already perceive several future problems you might encounter. It makes it hard to stay motivated and really hesitant to jump into it, rather than problem solving before working. Ying told me that I should really just start making the work and I will be able to problem solve and come up with new ideas as I physically develop the work.

Midterm



Critique Responcse

1. One of the main issues brought up was the idea that I wanted to represent an experience that wasn't mine. I had attempted to avoid this by using photographs and words from a direct interview of someone who had experienced this displacement. However, in creating this disappearing house, I had created an expression of my interpretation of an experience. There was a level of personality from the displaced community members missing.

With that being said, it was suggested that perhaps my understanding of these experiences were a bit outdated and that re joining the community would be beneficial. I couldn't agree with this more. The semester that I was working on the photojournalism project and a community art project with kids in a independent study was hands down the best and most fulfilling semester I have had at college. Getting away from the theoretical class room talk and out into the community to put my words into actions was both challenging and empowering. I think that the initial step towards interaction is always a bit nerve wracking, but once dialogue begins and progress is made it becomes a very rewarding experience (I hope for both parties).

2. Carrie's idea of my work this semester being documentation rather than objects was very freeing. I had been feeling very trapped in this idea that I need to create something that represents a community. However, it makes much more sense to build relationships before I attempt to build bridges between communities. I have already gotten in touch with Lori and I am waiting to hear back. I am also making plans to go to some community programs. Art by the people for the people!

3. Sue Johnson and Hannah Piper Burns commented on the way the doormat is working. Perhaps I could have community members make doormats with me with their words on it. I am still uneasy about the idea of having work in a gallery because of accessibility, though, and would prefer that if I did have objects that they would somehow be able to be incorporated into public art. Even in the gallery and in public would be better than just the gallery.

4. The artist Swoon created this giant floating fort using found objects and I am wondering if perhaps taking the path of making this space inaccessible I would be getting a point across to students. I realize that this is still a bit conceptual and would need to work on making the idea more realized. But I have learned that in order to do this I need to just go out and make things as well as talk to other people, even if it's just my friends to get a fresh perspective.

New Intention Statement

As I stated at the critique I'm interested in the osculation where our lives as diverse human beings overlap or touch even if just for a brief moment. The illumination of that point is what I believe is going to bring us closer to respectful and loving relationships. I believe that to reach this point of intersection a raw, visceral experience where we begin to see parts of ourselves in others is necessary to facilitate a dialogue that can help us to understand each other a little bit better and destroy the 'us' and 'them' to create a 'we'. It is essential to figure out what it is deep inside of us that makes us afraid of getting close to other people, to find out what is holding us back. We need to break down the walls and fences and barriers only to build them back up, big enough to house us all.

My ultimate goal for my SMP is to connect the St. Mary's College Community to the larger County community. Ultimately I want to do a community art project that involves both St. Mary's students and county residents. In order to get the St. Mary's college students interested in collaborating with their county neighbors I want to illuminate a shared experience.

A lot of students are being displaced from their on-campus housing for mold issues and I am curious as to if I can find a way to relate the stress and uncertainty they are feeling to the experiences of housing loss in the greater community. I do not wish to belittle the experience of losing a house and a community, but perhaps put into perspective how the similarities in the situations may create a point of intersection on which the students can relate and begin to see themselves and others as not so different.

However, in order to illuminate this shared experience, I believe it is vital to interact with both parties. As a student leader I believe that I have most of my bases covered at the college, but need to reach out more into the community. By creating these connections I can begin a dialogue that will lead to the creation of a representation of housing and living in St. Mary's County. Where are the Flattops residents now? What is housing accessibility like in the county now? What efforts are being made to make housing more accessible? Is the development for the Flattops land still happening? These are all questions I am setting out to answer.

I plan to document this process through photographs and audio interviews.

Progress Critique Two

Stitches



and

stories



Critique response

I brought many questions to this critique. Should I make a border around the quilt squares? Should I make a traditional quilt with sew patterns mimicking the designs within the squares? How can I involve other groups that are a part of this campus besides students and faculty? Will be quilt be functional? I became apparent to me that the quilt is more of metaphor acting at the stimulus for building and documenting relationships. It is also a platform for story telling. Like Carrie mentioned in the mid-term critique, my product for this semester does not necessarily need to be a physical work of art, but it could be a documentation of the process of going out into the community and building these relationships. For this reason I decided against making a traditional quilt with sewn patterns. I want each square to be physically connected.

The question was also brought up as to whom the quilt was uniting. My answer is the college community and people in St. Mary's county. There was mention of comparison between mold displacement and Flattops displacement. While I conducted interviews with students displaced from the mold and they had similar feelings of uncertainty and anger, I do not think the end result is the same. The students *constantly* had people looking out for their best interests and caring about them. The local government gave up on the Flattops and ultimately the residents were left to find new homes on their own.

Finally, Lisa suggested that I needed to continue to develop my definition of empathy and how I want it to work in my SMP. She suggested that I continue to write about it. By understanding this, it will become easier to approach groups and facilitate conversations about how this quilt will function and what it will hopefully represent. I also want to reach out to other individuals who are a part of this campus community including Bon Appétit, maintenance, and housekeeping. It was suggested that I find one contact and then it will easier to get others involved.

New Intentions

Through community collaboration, I am attempting to use quilt as a metaphor for the bringing together of separate entities. Community to me is much more than simply people living in the same geographical location, but rather the acknowledgement and celebration of differences to form a greater support system. The "quilt" is also a platform for story telling. Through story telling individuals develop their own identity as well as an increased awareness of others' experiences and expanded perceptions. I remember when I was first learning about the Flattops. My perceptions of place and space had completely changed. I don't think I'll ever think of that sound the same again. You know, the sound of roaring jets soaring through the clouds above your head tracing white lines like an etch-a-sketch in the blue sky taking someone to somewhere far from where they began. No. Now I just

visualize the hundred and sixty-nine families who were displaced from their homes, forced to travel to places unfamiliar and thrown into a constant state of unrest because of these aircrafts and the space they dictate. It was only through the sharing of stories that I was able to gain this new perspective on the place in which I live.

Engaging with different communities is a means of actively facilitating a dialogue. What do you want to know about me and what can I learn from you? By exploring different conceptions of home, I hope to bring a greater awareness to the complexities of place, community, and housing and challenge viewers to go beyond their current perceptions and conceptions. I don't want the dialogue to end with the completion of the quilt. I will keep the quilt open so that others may continue to contribute. I also plan on facilitating some sort of gathering, like a dinner, for all of the individuals involved so that they can meet and continue this dialogue.

I have also come to peace with the quilt being installed in the gallery. While I still believe that a gallery is inaccessible, the fact that the quilt is made by individuals who do not necessarily consider themselves artists and are not formally trained in art forces the gallery visitors to reconsider their definition of art. The medium of a quilt itself is not typically considered "high-art" and hanging it in a gallery will challenge that notion.

Studio Visit [Carrie Patterson]

My studio visit with Carrie Patterson was incredibly helpful and encouraging. I began by telling her my intentions of using the quilt as a metaphor of bringing separate entities together to create a cohesive whole. I showed her some of the examples that had already been made. She commented on the kinds of materials I was using and asked if I wanted the quilt to be functional or not. I had originally wanted the quilt to be functional, but after some consideration I think that it will be more successful if I focus on the actual outreach and process of quilt making rather than the final product. Carrie commented that it could be using the decorative language of quilts rather than the functionality of them to get my message across.

Carrie also asked what method I was using to get my message across. I had developed a lesson plan with brainstorming questions, but I realized that this was only targeted towards a specific group and that I needed to go back and create. Additionally, Carrie asked me to think about how I would tie all of it together. The act of bringing the squares together is most essential to me and I had been giving lots of thought to this. I had been researching Faith Ringgold, the AIDS quilt, and traditional quilts to get a sense of aesthetic choices. During the progress critique I proposed to the group the questions I had been pondering: Should I include a border? Should there be space between panels? If I do a traditional quilt design will it distract from the original panels? After talking to Carrie I realized that it is more important to focus on the act of getting people to think about home, both theirs and

others and bringing together those efforts in a visual form. I think in this case, the simpler the better. Carrie also brought up the idea of accessibility. The amount of people the quilt reaches will ultimately be the measure of success.

Finally, Carrie made several suggestions about artists and quilters I should seek advice from. First she told me to look up the Gees Bends Quilting Collective and Natalie Jeremijenko. The Collective would give me perspective on how quilts can be made in a community setting. Jeremijenko is an activist artist who could give me insight into how to prompt and frame questions to engage my participants. Secondly, she told me to contact Holly Blumner in the TFMS department who is teaching a FYS on quilting and also has experience with community quilts. I have plans to meet up with Professor Blumner and seek further quilting a

The Projections

Annotated Bibliography

Baca, Judith. "Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Cultured Society." California, Sacramento State University, Sacramento, 1996. Web. 7 Sep 2011.

<<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/art7/readings/JudyBaca.htm>>.

"Why is it not possible for public art to do more than "imitate" life? Public art could be *inseparable* from the daily life of the people for which it is created. Developed to live harmoniously in public space, it could have a function within the community and even provide a venue for their voices." In this essay, Baca confronts the issues inherent in public art such as how the artist can give a voice to everyone that occupies the space, rather than just assuming they are doing the community a favor by inserting their art into a space. It is imperative to consider how different cultures regard space and how this might affect the reception of the art. Baca ends by talking about how consideration of process is imperative in understanding the effects of public art.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Creating Democracy: A Dialogue with Krzysztof Wodiczko." *Art Journal*. 62.4 (2003): 32-47. Web. 7 Sep. 2011.

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3558486> .>.

In this interview, Wodiczko addresses the issue of democracy in public art. He says that it is important to be antagonistic in order to spark dialogue that will allow us to understand our differences woven into the fabric of society and in turn, learn to

respect each other. Wodiczko also offers the idea that public space is run by those who have the power and privilege to do so and asks how we can give those not in this group a voice without literally handing them a microphone. He answers by suggesting that artist work with these people to create artifacts of their stories, memories, and experiences. He relates a lot of his conceptual ideas to psychological theories on trauma and having the victims give testimony to their trauma to ultimately begin to heal. Ultimately, though, the choice is up to those who feel marginalized to use this platform or not. This gives the people that he works with a sense that it is not just his project, but theirs as well. However, he thinks that communities can often be a form of “symbolic incest” and that his projects offer individuals a chance to step out from the community and realize their agency and independent thought.

Lopez, Tiffany Ana. "Imaging Community: Video in the Installation Work of Pepón Osorio." *Art Journal*. 54.4 (1995): 58-64. Web. 7 Sep. 2011. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/777696>>.

In this article, Osorio’s work is described and critically analyzed. Osorio’s *The Scene of the Crime* that focuses on the Latino body in mainstream culture is a roped off space, which only allows the viewer to enter temporarily. He also includes a welcome mat with unconventional text on it that relates to the Latino body. He also uses direct quotes from interviews with people in the Latino community to literally give them a voice. Osorio confronts the viewer of this work by including mirrors in the installation. These mirrors force the viewer to face their own location within this “cultural wounding/healing.” Essentially, Osorio’s work tells us that artwork on its own cannot bring people together, but an obligation of involvement from the community is necessary to build bridges “between and among communities and cultures.”

Becker, J. (2004, March). Public art: An essential component of creating communities. *American for the Arts*, Washington, DC: Monograph.

This article gives an overview of the various forms public art takes and how it comes to be. This article is more descriptive than analytical. It gives numerous examples of monuments, civic engagement, and beatifying efforts as types of public art and how and why they were executed. The issues of critical language and diversity are touched upon in relation to a shared identity. This identity can only be understood with the involvement and participation of everyone from the community.

Rosler, Martha. *If You Lived Here, The City In Art, Theory, And Social Activism*. The New Press, 1999.

The chapter titled: “Housing: Gentrification, Dislocation and Fighting Back” is a transcript from the open forum held on February 28th, 1989 held at a Dia Art Foundation performance space in New York. It goes into detail about the causes of

homelessness and offers suggestions on how to fight back. One of the main reasons is that the government is attacking public housing because they see it as an opportunity to gentrify, push out the poor, and make more money from higher quality housing. However, this displaces the people who were living in that space under a cheaper rent. A filmmaker, Bienvenida Matias, made a film about Latino tenants in the 1970s. In the process of making the film over a few years, she moved in to the building to really get a sense being connected to the space and the people that occupy it. She went to tenant meetings and conducted participant observations. This ultimately lead to a greater understanding of the humanity inherent in housing.

Schumann, Peter. "The Radicality of the Puppet Theatre." *TDR*. 35.4 (1991): 75-83. Print. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1146164> .>.

This article talks about the subversive nature of the Bread and Puppet Theatre and how it affects their audience. Often obscuring the problems they are trying to illuminate makes it easier for the audience to take in at first and think about later. Humor is a tactic that keeps the audience engaged. The Puppet Theatre redefines the language of communication and manipulated the viewer's sense of self-consciousness. To make the viewer aware of their existence in this place here and now under these circumstances is to make them aware of the very nature of their own thought processes. Puppet Theatre is "socially embedded sculpture," which ultimately means that it is an act that attempts to embody visceral changes within ones inner world to facilitate thoughts about the outer one.

Allen, Gloria S, and Nancy G. Tuckhorn. *A Maryland Album: Quilt making Traditions, 1634-1934*. Nashville, Tenn: Rutledge Hill Press, 1995. Print.

The Maryland Association for Family and Community Education created this book as a documentation of the American Quilt making tradition. It delves into the history of quilt making and the time and money that it takes to create such a project. It talks about how quilt making came to Maryland through the Dove and the Ark on the Potomac. It uses primary sources to investigate how quilts were made and used during Maryland's early history. It is quite appropriate that my quilt has to do with St. Mary's county, which is one of the first places the quilt making tradition was brought to America.

Auther, Elissa. *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. Print.

This books looks at the history of fiber media and the hierarchy of art and craft. It challenges conventional notions of textiles and art. Additionally, it addresses the roles of race and gender in regards to the way art is defined and valued. It begins by describing the art of fibers and the battle for it to be considered a legitimate art, as well as its context in post-minimalism and the politics of gender involved in the art

and craft divide. This book includes artist's interviews and numerous visual references.

Ringgold, Faith, and Dan Cameron. *Dancing at the Louvre: Faith Ringgold's French Collection and Other Story Quilts*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1998. Print.

I used this book as visual reference when talking about the history of quilt making. It contains bibliographical information about Faith Ringgold as well as commentary of Ringgold's French Collection and other story quilts. It addresses many themes that are apparent in Ringgold's work and story quilts. It also includes background information on many of her artworks. The visual reproductions of Ringgold's work provided to be a great resource and context for quilt workshops.

Ringgold, Faith. *Tar Beach*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991. Print.

This is Faith Ringgold's first book. It is acrylic on canvas paper with fabric borders that come directly from her story quilt "Tar Beach." The story is about a girl living through the Great Depression and the way that she sees her world. It chronicles the activities her and her family does together including picnicking on the roof of her Family's Harlem apartment, which she calls a "tar beach." She also pictures herself flying over the George Washington Bridge, which her father built. The story

Robert Klanten, *Art & Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, (Berlin, Germany: Gestalten, 2011), 90-93.

This book is a collection of political art and artists who are also activists. It explores the impact of politics in contemporary art and what movements and events influenced these artists. Images of the artists' works as well as biographical and contextual information are provided. This book offers a look into the different ways of raising awareness and facilitating change. A variety of techniques are used to reach their audiences and this book documents that for the readers.

Gude, Olivia. "Art Education for Democratic Life." *Art Education*. 62.6 (2009): 6-11. Print.

Through self-identity development and consequentially, development of a range of perspectives, art education can facilitate dialogue to create democracy. Through art education students gain skills to help them to reflect on and represent their experiences. This meaning making helps the individual to gain a sense that identity is not singular, but rather, fluid, complex, and ever changing. This realization can facilitate new patterns of perception. The idea that there are multiple ways of knowing and existing in this world help individuals develop empathy towards others' experiences. Art education will also enhance one's ability to perceive and develop a multitude of possibilities. This open and forward thinking is how diversity is understood and appreciated and how we can progress towards a democratic future.

Future Reading List

- Fischer, Peter. *Mosaic, History and Technique*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971. Print.
- Fortunato, Carlo. *The Art and Application of Mosaic Tile*. Chicago: International Crafts, 1956. Print.
- Jenkins, Louisa, and Barbara Mills. *The Art of Making Mosaics*. Princeton, N.J: Van Nostrand, 1957. Print.
- Rossi, Ferdinando. *Mosaics, a Survey of Their History and Techniques*. New York: Praeger, 1970. Print.

The Insights and Inspirations

Artist Talks

Ying Li

Yesterday we went to a lecture by the visiting artist Ying Li. She was born in Beijing, China under the communist regime. She grew up around a lot of political and propaganda art including highly stylized murals. When she was in elementary school, the Cultural Revolution of China was emerging. Her father was a professor at a college and he was accused of anti-revolution sentiments and was sent to a labor camp. Consequentially, Ying moved to the countryside to do work. It was at this time that she began painting. She described her attraction to painting in that it is exciting in and of itself and that she subject doesn't bare the weight of importance. Once schools re-opened she got accepted to go to college and there she studied oil painting, but she disliked traditional Chinese painting because it did not have enough color in it. In 1983, Ying came to the United States, and described the glow of the city lights from Manhattan as being a magical experience. Soon after, Ying enrolled in Parsons School of Design to get her MFA in painting. In 1997 she began teaching at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, where she still currently works.

In her talk, Ying brought up 6 principles of Chinese painting and calligraphy including application of color, stroke, texture, and link between handwriting and personality. After seeing her works in the slide show it is clear to see the influences of these principles on her approach to art. All of her paintings had this incredible and alluring texture. You can truly feel the energy that went into the production of

the painting. While at Haverford College, Ying had a profound experience when painting landscapes and became extremely interested in the way that we move through the landscape rather than just what we see from a specific viewpoint. Through the influence of the 6 principles, her paintings developed a rhythm that makes you want to just jump into the landscape and climb through it.

This is not Ying's first time to St. Mary's College of Maryland, but she was still excited to be here. Her passion towards her work and her general excitement over art made the presentation very enjoyable. You can tell that she truly loves what she does. The last time she had visited she painted landscapes of The Dove in Historic St. Mary's. In her lecture she mentioned that she didn't always know what she wanted to do, but that she knew what she didn't want to do. I feel like this so very often. I know what I want art to be, but sometimes I get frustrated in trying to make it a physical and visual reality. She also mentioned at art demands persistence and time. This could not be truer, but often we get so hung up on ideas and frustrations that it seems almost impossible to power through. One of her last comments in the presentation was that it is necessary to draw before she could paint. This idea of smaller creative acts breeding more creativity is critical in the development and processing of ideas and project outcomes. So often I find myself with the urge to just jump in feet first without a single consideration of logistics. I need to remember that we need to crawl before we can run.

Successions Exhibit Opening

Prints by African American Artists from the Jean and Robert Steele Collection

The Successions exhibit began with a talk from Ms. Ingersoll, the lady who started the Boyden Gallery as a way for people to see art who did not previously have that opportunity. The Ingersoll family saw the gallery as a teaching and learning opportunity. Accessibility to art was the mission of the gallery. She said that she felt as though everyone should have the opportunity to experience and make art. Understanding the intentions behind the Boyden gallery gave me a completely different perspective and feeling towards the gallery. It was also a very nice segue into the exhibit Successions.

Jean and Robert Steele work at the University of Maryland, College Park. They have been collecting art for quite some time. They offered many tips for collecting art including training your eyes to determine quality, going to lectures, talking to artists, focusing on a goal and figuring out what your interests are, understanding how the artwork is physically made, and finding pieces that resonate with you personally. When creating a collection they take in to consideration aesthetic merit, artistic reputation, technical mastery, and how each piece will connect to the others.

This collection, Successions, was initiated back in 2002 at the University of Maryland. The major catalogue was from 1750 to 1950 and it laid the groundwork for African American art history. The exhibit has traveled to 15 venues around the nation. It takes a look at three generations of printmakers. The Steele's hope is to

challenge archetypes and stereotypes about African American artists and art. I was really excited to see Romare Bearden in the show because he was one of the first artists I learned about in high school that I really fell in love with. I was also familiar with Faith Ringold's artwork from my first year seminar, The Art of Political Protest.

I only wish that the exhibit talk had focused more on these incredible art works. I appreciate that the Steeles' were trying to educate us on the business of collecting art, but they were both so passionate about the work that it would have been beneficial to educate us on the pieces as well. I think that even if I don't plan on ever collecting famous artworks or wanting my artworks to be purchased by collectors, that I can apply some of the suggested techniques to my art making such as using all of your senses to develop the work—especially your heart.

Christopher Saah

Christopher Saah is currently a visiting Photography professor at St. Mary's. I am in his Photo Studio class so it was really neat to be able to see him beyond just a professor and see him as an artist. Additionally, Professor Saah is a St. Mary's alumni, so it was also interesting to see what life as an artist is like after graduation (which is coming quite too soon.) At St. Mary's he studied English and Philosophy, but was also interested in film. He decided not to double major so that he could focus on classes that he really enjoyed, rather than be forced to take classes to fulfill requirements.

After graduation he moved to LA to work for a commercial production company. At night, after work, he would go out and shoot. This was his first time shooting in 4 to 5 years and his first time working with color film. His work "Nightscenes" explores space and place and how it can be transformed into something unimaginable. He is interested in space as a psychological enclosure that one can enter into it and imagine your presence in that space. He liked to place the viewer at a specific vantage point. He soon realized that different types of lights create different colors on film, almost like filters. This reminded him a lot of cinema, which is a major inspiration for his artwork. His next series was entitled "Displacements" and focused on the use of color to reveal information about spaces. He controlled and limited the color pallet to create a mood or feeling related to this space. He looked at the work of Pictorialist while still referencing early cinema. He mentioned that he took a lot of time to look at source material.

His most recent work is still a reference to his love of cinema. Saah constructs the images in this body of work to create an entirely imagined space. He uses perspectives that are physically impossible in this world. Additionally, his aesthetic choices including vignetting and rounding the edges of the frame contribute to this cinematic creation. Saah is interested in referencing 16mm film. There is a lot of texture and detail in these images, but no specific reference point. He feels that without a reference point, the viewer can enter the image wherever they choose.

This seems to fit right in with his overarching theme of exploration of psychological space.

Hannah Piper Burns

Hannah Piper Burns is an experimental documentary maker inspired by musicals that utilize appropriation of both sound and film footage. She mashes up these two appropriated sources and then adds her own poetry as text to create her own narrative. She is interested in what is transcended in the movements on film. She adds appropriated music to it to enhance the movements. While many of the film appropriations come from dance movies of the 50s such as *West Side Story*, she is not nostalgic for these days. Rather she feels they were dark, awful times where actors were exploited. Her text highlights this dissonance in an attempt to rub against that nostalgia. However, by using older film clips and more contemporary music, she hopes to attract an audience that spans over many generations.

Nevertheless, Hannah Piper Burns did not become an experimental documentary maker out of nowhere. She had to begin somewhere, and that somewhere was here at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Hannah is an alumni who completed her SMP in 2006. At this time she was working in both photography and sculpture. She was interested in expressionistic color and narrative. She continued on this path into grad school, however, the singular image was no longer enough for the narrative that she wanted. She wished to move beyond the gestural. For this reason, Hannah moved into more time-based media to experiment in different ways of unfolding narrative. This is when she began working in the documentary format. She relied heavily on found footage that she then appropriated because she felt that she was not strong at shooting. Her strengths were in post-production, and she felt her time was better spent doing something she enjoyed and felt confident in to create the strongest narratives possible. The narrative is already there, dictated by existing clip. Her job was to create parallel narrative through the addition of music and text. Hannah removes elements from the film footage (breaks in the scene) and puts in new elements (text).

It was really nice to see another successful St. Mary's art student so successful. To see where Hannah was at her SMP to where she is now is not only encouraging but also inspiring. In the talk she mentioned that art is constant negotiation after you develop a concept. You negotiate reality and compromise over and over again. I definitely relate to this notion, especially in working with other people's narratives. Often I have an idea but it only works in my reality, not the group as a whole, so it is my job to compromise on my original concept to create something that works for everyone.

Artist Sources

SWOON

Swimming Cities of Switchback Sea, 2008 Hudson River, New York, USA



http://www.arteism.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/dsc04931_sw8chback.jpg

Konbit Shelter, Haiti 2010



<http://www.individualsole.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Swoon-Konbit-Crew-Working-Photo-Tod-Beelle-Upper-Playground-540x360.jpg>

The conceptual issues Swoon is interested in are the collaborative, the ephemeral, the use of available resources, and activism. Specifically, much of Swoon's work is focused on creating a purpose for a community to gather.

